



## Your Legal Assistance Program

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**DISCLAIMER:** This handout has been produced by the office of the Staff Judge Advocate, ESC/JA, Hanscom AFB, MA 01731. This handout is for general guidance only. It is not meant to be a substitute for legal advice and it cannot be cited as legal authority. Before taking any action, you should consult an attorney for guidance.

*\*\*Air Force legal assistance attorneys may not represent clients in a court or administrative proceeding.*

Legal Assistance is provided to the installation pursuant to Air Force Instruction (AFI) 51-504, *Legal Assistance, Notary, and Preventive Law Programs*. Its purpose is to ensure that the legal difficulties of military members do not adversely affect command effectiveness or readiness (mission-related legal assistance) and to provide legal assistance, resources permitting, to certain other categories of beneficiaries (non-mission-related legal assistance).

### **Those eligible for this service are:**

- Active-duty members (including reservists and guardsmen on federal active duty);
- Their family members (entitled to an identification card);
- Retired personnel and their family members (including unremarried former spouses) entitled to an identification card; and
- Civilian personnel who are deploying.

Normally, the client must give the attorney providing legal assistance all the facts concerning the legal matter at issue. Clients are encouraged to make full and fair disclosures of the entire situation. What is told to the attorney (by the client) is considered privileged information which cannot be divulged by the attorney. It is vital that the client bring all available documentation and information concerning the legal issue when they come for legal assistance. A document that may seem unimportant to the client may be the key to finding the answer to the legal question. In addition, to avoid distractions, please try not to bring small children to the legal office unless absolutely necessary.

There are limits to the Air Force attorney providing advice on personal, civil legal matters to individuals. **Client-attorney relationships cannot be formed for the following matters:**

1. Personal commercial enterprises (not including Servicemember's Civil Relief Act issues);

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2. Criminal matters or other official matters in which the Air Force has an interest in the final resolution, such as violations of ethics or law of armed conflict issues;
3. Legal issues raised on behalf of another person; and
4. Drafting and/or reviewing real estate sales contracts or its closing documents, and separation agreements or divorce decrees.

Attorneys are strongly discouraged from giving legal advice over the telephone for a number of reasons, such as inability to check/verify identification of the individual, inability to review all pertinent documents, and time limitations to assess whether the client has attained a complete understanding of the legal problem.

**Legal Assistance Hours**

Legal assistance service is available on a walk-in basis every Friday morning (0900 - 1100). Also, notary services and powers of attorney are available on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday from 0800 – 1500 and Wednesday 0800 - 1300.

Will appointments are set up *after* the client has filled out a will worksheet questionnaire. The form is found by clicking the legal office link at [www.hanscom.af.mil](http://www.hanscom.af.mil). Will appointments are scheduled in half hour or hour slots on Tuesdays between 0900 – 1100 and on Thursdays between 1300 – 1500. Clients are asked to arrive thirty minutes prior to review their wills.

For further information see AFI 51-504 *Legal Assistance, Notary, and Preventive Law Programs*.

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